

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T STATE 279594

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FOLLOWING REPEAT SECSTATE 279594 ACTION PARIS 26 NOV 75

QUOTE

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3.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SITUATION

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

1. BECAUSE OF GISCA
D D'ESTAING'S GREAT INTEREST IN
PORTUGUESE EEVELOPMENTS, PLEASE SEE PIERRE BROSSOLETTE AND
REVIEW THE SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

2. PORTUGAL HAS ENTERED ITS MOST SERIOUS CRISIS SINCE THE
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REVOLUTION. THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT'S EFNORTS TO RESTORE

DISCIPLINE TO THE ARMED FORCES AND STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY UNDERMINED BY THE COMMUNISTS AND ULTRA-LEFT. TODAY'S PARATROOPER REBELLION HAS FORCED A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT, THE MELO ANTUNES GROUP IN THE ARMED FORCES AND SOCIALIST AND POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ON THE ONE HAND AND PRO-COMMUNIST FORCES ON THE OTHER. THE EFFORTS OF THE FORMER TO PERSUADE A RELUCTANT PRESIDENT INTO TAKING DEFINITIVE ACTION BEFORE THE COUNTRY BECOMES COMPLETELY UNGOVERNABLE ARE BEING RESISTED STRONGLY BY RADICAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY ELEMENTS.

3. FOCUS OF STRUGGLE IS LISBON AREA WHERE THE OVERWHELMINGLY DEMOCRATIC STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRY IS OFFSET BY THE

CONCENTRATION OF LEFTIST AND RADICAL GROUPS. IT SEEMS

IMPORTANT TO US THAT AZEVEDO, THE MODERATES, AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES REALIZE THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE. WE HAVE THEREFORE SENT URGENT INSTRUCTIONS TO OUR AMBASSADOR TO ASSURE THEM OF OUR SUPPORT AND TO INVITE THEIR SUGGESTIONS AS TO WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO THEM.

4# WE RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE PAST THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO TAKE ACTIONS IN PORTUGAL WHICH COULD BE TAKEN AS INTERVENTION. HOWEVER, WE HOPE THAT BECAUSE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION GOVERNMENT

WILL SHARE OUR WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT THE LISBON GOVERNMENT AT MOMENT OF ITS GREATEST CRISIS.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT (PREFERABLY CONVEYED PERSONALLY BY AN OFFICIAL CLOSE TO AND IDENTIFIED WITH THE PRESIDENT) COULD GIVE AZEVEDO AND OTHERS WHO ARE WILLING TO RESIST ULTRA-LEFT PRESSURES THE EXTRA ENCOURAGEMENT THEY MAY NEED. WE BELIEVE THAT BECAUSE THE PORTUGUESE LOOK TRADITIONALLY TO FRANCE FOR CULTURAL LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL INSPIRATION, SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD HAVE

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GREAT WEIGHT.

6. WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE ANY IDEAS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO TURN THE PRESENT SITUATION TO A MORE POSITIVE DIRECTION AND, TO THIS END, WE ARE WILLING TO HAVE PROMPT CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM.

7. YOU MAY TELL PIERRE BROSSOLETTE THAT IN ADDITION TO
OUR OWN APPROACH IN LISBON WE ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE
BRITISH AND GERMANS UNDERTAKE SIMILAR STEPS. UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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